

DNR helps fund Frost site cleanup



KENOSHA NEWS PHOTO BY PAUL WILLIAMS
The abandoned Frost Co. compound at 6523 14th Ave. will be cleaned up and the buildings razed with \$250,000 of city money and more than \$1 million from the state Department of Natural Resources.

State aid for project at \$1 million

BY J. TAYLOR BUSHONG
KENOSHA NEWS

A costly, 4-year-old mess at 6523 14th Ave. will soon disappear.

Mayor John Antaramian announced Monday the city will raze and clean the abandoned Frost Co. compound thanks to an agreement worth at least \$1 million from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

The 4-acre, seven-building complex at the edge of the Lincoln neighborhood has been abandoned since 1995. The DNR's gift is labeled a "designation," which is rare in Kenosha but has been done elsewhere in the state by the DNR.

"This was a top priority for us

— to get these buildings down and the site cleaned up," Antaramian said. "We have worked very hard on this."

"It's also a real positive for Lincoln. I have always felt that vacant buildings destroy neighborhoods."

The city is putting up \$250,000 toward the two-phase project, which Antaramian said would be paid for out of "any of a number of city funds." The DNR will pay the remainder of the costs, estimated at more than \$1 million.

The buildings will be demolished starting this summer, with the remaining ground pollution cleaned up in late summer or fall. Antaramian said the goal is to complete both phases of the project by the end of the year.

Antaramian said the land will be kept vacant until the city decides how to redevelop it.

The Frost plant manufactured plumbing parts and swimming pool equipment from 1902 to 1995. But the 93 years of industrial use

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left a huge contamination problem, with everything from asbestos and flammable liquids to sulfuric acid and industrial sludge on the site.

It took the Environmental Protection Agency four months in 1997 to remove the materials and secure the compound. Some 630 cubic yards of hazardous solid waste were hauled off to licensed landfills.

The EPA's bill to the city was \$973,900, documents showed.

Under state law, the site automatically fell into the hands of

'THIS WAS A top priority for us — to get these buildings down and the site cleaned up.'

John Antaramian
mayor

the county, but county officials didn't want it because of the contamination. After city officials requested it, the County Board last summer voted to hand it

over. In December, aldermen wrote off Frost's unpaid tax bill of nearly \$62,000.

The redevelopment news is a major plus for the Lincoln neighborhood, which has long been plagued by closed or closing industries — Outokumpu Copper at 1420 63rd St. plans to shut down its 112-year-old, 29-acre plant on June 1.

"I'm very pleased and I'm sure the residents are too," Lincoln area alderman Katherine Marks said of the DNR's award. "It's been an eyesore. The next step is to figure out what uses that land has."

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